

# AJC JOURNAL

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**On December 7, at press conferences in Berlin and New York, AJC released a list of over 250 current German companies that had used forced and slave labor during the Nazi era.**

AJC published a list of companies that used forced and slave labor to put pressure on German companies to join an industry and government fund compensating the survivors. In addition, we hoped to clarify the historical record. Prior to the release of the list, only 24 companies had publicly agreed to contribute to the fund, although nearly all German companies had relied on slave and forced labor during the war, as Professor Ulrich Herbert, foremost expert on the subject, explained at AJC's New York press conference. For 50 years, German firms had closed their eyes to the past.

AJC's website received an unprecedented 75,000 hits.

The publication of the list came at a time when negotiations between Germany and representatives of slave and forced laborers had stalemated over the size of the fund and were on the brink of faltering.

Sources have told us that AJC's action restarted the negotiations. Indeed, 10 days after AJC's list was published, agreement was reached on establishing a compensation fund of \$5.2 billion. AJC is now pressing for the Bundestag, the German Parliament, to quickly pass the necessary laws so that payments can begin immediately.

## AJC Turns Up the Heat on German Industry



Deidre Berger, the new director of AJC's Lawrence & Lee Ramer Center for German-Jewish Relations, released the list of German companies at a press conference in Berlin.

The day after the list was published four additional companies signed on, and little over a week later, 23 more had joined. As of January 14, 123 companies had publicly agreed to support the fund, and the numbers continue to climb. Moreover, the list generated widespread media coverage in both Germany (see German Report, page 4) and the United States, where it was featured as the lead story on NBC's *Six-O'Clock News* in New York. The day after the release of the list,

What They're Saying About AJC

"The deal was struck a week after a prominent Jewish-American group turned up the heat on German industry."

*The London Times,*  
Dec. 15, 1999